



# The Omen



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Issue 2

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**Staff Box: (In order of appearance)**

**Ida:** Now everyone is as unsociable as me and I don't feel like I'm missing out on parties/gatherings despite knowing that I hate crowds and being sociable anyway.

**Finn:** Not having to deal with straight men is pretty high on the list

Front Cover: Sarah-Marie Taylor 18F

Back Cover: Sarah-Marie Taylor 18F

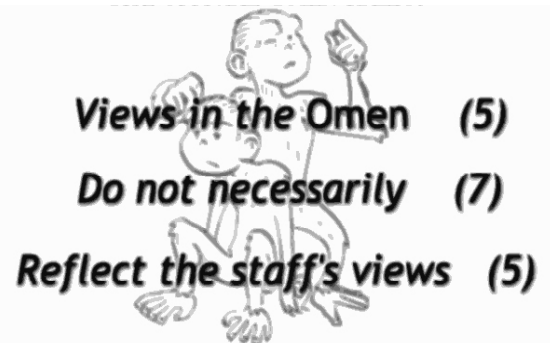
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**Policy**

The Omen is a bimonthly publication that is the world's only example of the consistent application of a straight-forward policy: **we publish all signed submissions from members of the Hampshire community that are not libelous.** Send us your impassioned yet poorly-thought-out rants, self-insertion fanfiction, MS Paint comics, and whiny emo poetry: we'll publish it all, and we're happy to do it. The Omen is about giving you a voice, no matter how little you deserve it. Since its founding in December of 1992 by Stephanie Cole, the Omen has hardly ever missed an issue, making it Hampshire's longest-running publication.

Your submission must include the name you use around campus: an open forum comes with a responsibility to take ownership of your views. **Views expressed in the Omen do not necessarily reflect the views of The Omen, the Omen editrix, or anyone, anywhere, living or dead.**

Anyone can submit to the Omen, but you can also become Omen staff! Omen staff consists of whoever shows up for meetings, which usually takes place every Thursday night in the basement of Merrill B (past the laundry room); the only permanent position is that of editrix. You should come and answer the staff question. We don't bite. You can find the Omen on every other Thursday in Saga, the post office, online at <http://expelallo.men>, and just about any other place we can find to put it.



# EDITORIAL

## Ida Kao

Hello Hampshire College community, and welcome to the first non-themed issue of the Fall 2020 semester! I'm writing this on the other side of teenagedom... teenagehood? I'm twenty years old and a day, basically. I spent all of my actual birthday (the 12th; this is being written on October 13th, for reference) catching up on sleep and making sure I didn't spend every waking moment miserable. I also remembered a song my sister often played called Teenagers by My Chemical Romance, and am amused at the idea of playing it in front of my 19 year old friends while grumbling about how things were like when I was their age.

I feel like I always write something for the Omen about my birthday, but really, it's never been a terribly positive experience. Americans make a huge deal about birthdays, and being the socially awkward person I am, I distinctly remember a bunch of birthday parties and tables full of gifts for people I desperately wanted to fit in with, only to find myself standing alone as everyone around me chatted in groups of two or three. My parents have always been weird about letting people come to our house and I didn't know the first thing about planning a party, so I never had a party myself, which was probably why I was never gifted much of anything nor fussed over when my birthday rolled around. This same group of friends ended up being racist so I stopped talking to them, and it wasn't until much later that I realized that I was never really part of this group anyway. Funny what life throws at you in order to make you realize your mistakes. I've repeated this mistake a few times at Hampshire, it seems, and quarantine made me realize that a few people I kept in close contact with did nothing but condescend or mistreat me while constantly asking for help with academics, extracurriculars, or interpersonal affairs. I guess I've learned from my mistakes in high school, to some extent.

Of course, as much as I have reminisced on my ambivalent relationship with the concept of birthdays and the experiences of the ones I've had in the past, nothing is hanging over my head right now like anxieties over the future! From Div stuff to a professor at one of my Amherst classes asking us to think about how we would parent our kids, if we plan on having them (for the record, I don't want any unless you count dogs, but was still thinking over it anyway) to the alum that looks suspiciously like Andy Samberg wearing glasses proposing to his now-fiancee (congrats JGard!) on my birthday, which was an interesting coincidence. And this is just my own personal future! This is not even including the state of the world as I age. Will Black Lives Matter actually make a difference this time around, or will white America settle back into complacency? Will white women who whine about misogyny in alt right circles like Lauren Southern realize the idiocy of yoking themselves to an inherently sexist movement? Will racial tensions get worse with 4chan, 8chan, and the worse parts of Reddit allowing anonymous gatherings of white supremacists and incels? Will we avoid increasing average global temperatures by 2 degrees Celsius? I, for one, don't think there will be enough of a positive change in race relations, gender relations, and certainly not carbon emissions, to keep this planet from imploding in any number of horrifying scenarios. And I don't think I'm all that cynical, either. Collective humanity is dumb and we have plenty of historical precedent to tell us that, although I'm too lazy to bring up any examples. I'm just being realistic about the future that is bleak. As much as I object to Greta Thunberg being given TIME's most important person of the year over the Hong Kong protesters, her point that her childhood was taken away from her makes a point that I didn't really grasp at first. I am staring into the void of the unknown and there's little to

no excitement there. It's just a lot of wondering whether I can get a job and actually do something I care about while not starving or being homeless. Not whether I can change the world or do something cool. Wow, this sure is a depressing editorial. Nothing like staying up all night and deprecating yourself of all the sleep you just caught up on to make you reflect on the state of the planet and your powerlessness as a young person (but not too young!). I guess I am turning into a stodgy old coot with back problems. I've written myself into a corner, haven't I? No means

*It was at this point that Ida completely lost her will to write this editorial and foisted it off on her long-suffering predecessor. Yes, it is I, Chloe, back from the editrix grave. It is not my birthday, although I must report that my current age is, quite disturbingly, 23. I don't envy you all in your Covid-schooling. I currently work at Middle/High School and I have to say that from where I'm sitting the carnage of online classes is horrific. So I sympathize.*

*I don't really have anything to say either, but I'll do my best. Covid sucks. Racism sucks. Climate Change sucks. But we been knew (I've been spending too much time on the internet, I'm sorry). But the day to day life goes on: take pleasure in the small things. Pets, those close to you, yummy food, crunchy fall leaves, sweaters, and laughter. And even in times when things are too much, and even the small things aren't really helping, remember to take a breath. 2020 has been bleak and, as Ida said, to be perfectly honest, 2021 probably ain't gonna be much better. But don't let yourself turn into a cynical old person, that's how you start to think that changes which have already happened are all we're ever gonna get. And that's simply not true.*

*So happy birthday Ida, and to everyone else who is facing another year of life. You are loved.*

*Chloe Omelchuck, Former Omen Editrix*

*P.S. Here is a picture of a kitten:*



# SECTION SPEAK

## **BLM Should Not Be A Trend, But It Is Anyway**

By Ida Kao (written to Chloe Omelchuck)

July 24, 2020

Hi Chloe!

I feel so bad for not answering you sooner. I've been slacking on writing my Division II retrospective as well, and I've found that getting myself going by writing can actually motivate me to pick up other stuff I've stopped working on. I was actually thinking about writing about this in my Division II retrospective, although I realized it was more appropriate for "of the moment" writing and not my Div II as a whole.

Essentially, I'm inspired by, but also incredibly concerned for, the momentum that Black Lives Matter and awareness of racial inequality has gained in response to the death of George Floyd. Even more specifically, I'm concerned that the call to purchase from Black-owned businesses has been warped from its original intent to create an easy way for people to avoid having serious engagement with Black Lives Matter, and more generally racism and how it permeates everyone's lives.

First, about the wave of interest and even activism from George Floyd's death. It's good that so many people care, and it's good that a lot of people seem to be doing something in response to it. My concern was initially just that 1) people and now corporations are talking about this because it's trendy to talk about it. Now it's no longer controversial to publicly say that Black lives have been undervalued and treated as disposable, or that American society is white supremacist. Of course, I think most people at Hampshire always knew this to be true, but Hampshire is widely acknowledged to be significantly more leftist than wider society. Which means that corporations are posting about BLM and George

Floyd, or even donating to appropriate causes and making pledges to make their workplaces more welcoming towards BIPOC. Which isn't bad on its face, but I am reminded again and again of the argument to remove the personhood status of corporations. Corporations are only accountable to their shareholders, and the only thing those shareholders want to see are dollar signs. They do not have a conscience or a moral compass the way a human might, and the humans in charge of these corporations are being pressured to not listen to their moral compasses in the name of those shareholders. Frankly, they would be incentivized to kill puppies and hide it from the public if it helps their bottom line. So why would shareholders care if the workplace is toxic for their BIPOC employees? Because it makes the company look good, and positive image translates into greater profit margins. I don't know how much the corporate donations/reforms/etc. are driving the current climate of awareness, but I suspect it is not negligible. And once corporations have made sure to clean up their image and some gestures to promote equality, whether token or sincere, they will cease to care about this issue.

My second concern is with the organic, grassroots part of... whatever it is. It's hard to pin down everything I'm trying to talk about here; there are so many ways people have approached this that I'm not sure what to call it. I think it extends beyond police brutality and Black Lives Matter to the realization that there are systems in which race affects all of our lives. And the resulting conversations, actions, etc. shouldn't be a trend, but it is. I was genuinely surprised at the wave of protests in response to his death, because there is a laundry list of high profile deaths of Black people at the hands of police, and even more being severely injured or belittled for no reason other than being Black. It makes me wonder why so many more people care this time when a stack of dead bodies the size of Mount Everest didn't cause people to care in the way they do now. Sure, there were previous waves of activism in response to high profile deaths, but those died down eventually; how long until the ones in response to Floyd's death taper off? His death was on camera, and many of the previous police brutality deaths weren't, which I think is why the response was as huge as it was. Still, many of the mass movements in response essentially did nothing to initiate real change and felt like it could be "virtue signaling," where people pretend to care more about something in order to seem like a better, more moral person than they actually are. A YouTube video from one

of my favorite Black creators, T1J, talked about the BlackoutTuesday hashtag, and how it turned into a huge mess ([link here](#)). He even used the example I was going to use about people who did nothing more than post black squares to make themselves feel good and anti-racist, only to clutch their purses the second someone Black walks by them. One thing I hadn't thought of was that even if posting the black square is easy, doesn't inherently mean that it shouldn't be done, only that it is a problem if the purse clutching and other racial insensitivities continue. He also touches on the corporate side of this, but I think he's a touch more forgiving about corporations that are not "being obviously unethical."

So, Chloe, you might be wondering why I spend a page and a half telling you about why I feel uneasy about two totally different parts of this movement/culture shift/whatever you want to call it when I talked specifically about the call to support Black owned businesses. Well, I think my concern is the unholy marriage of these two problems. In the same way T1J discusses social media "activism" being used by individuals in lieu of the realization that racial inequality is inherent to this society and said individuals enacting steps to address this, corporate support of these issues seems to only encourage mindless consumerism that would only benefit a very specific Black person. I feel compelled to ask why purchasing stuff we don't need is alright so long as we are enriching a select few BIPOC individuals at the expense of everyone else, including the many BIPOC who are not business owners. Which is not to say that Black business owners are not especially vulnerable to financial problems and individual Black-owned businesses don't need support, especially with the pandemic making in-person shopping difficult, but there are Black people who are homeless, unemployed, and otherwise more in need of aid than business owners. More generally, there are causes beyond helping individuals and address racial wealth inequalities through policy or political advocacy, and even police brutality, which was what sparked this movement in the first place. Instead of donating that money, or even just time, it feels like this puts people in the mindset of spending to show their support, which is exactly what corporations want. I should mention that I brought this up to a friend and she pointed out that someone could easily do both, and even without spare cash anyone could simply purchase groceries and other necessities at Black-owned stores. Even if the Black

community as a whole was not helped, it could still divert resources from more problematic sellers. It briefly convinced me that there was still some small way I could help, until I tried to find a Black-owned grocery store near me, and then a national service that could still get me fresh produce. I could buy Black-owned cookies, heirloom grain flours, and wine from across the nation, but I was stuck with corporate supermarkets for what I absolutely needed to eat. I then took a look at my own bank account and realized that I had only so much money to spare, and when push came to shove I would rather buy myself something instead of donating it and receiving nothing back. And let's be honest... isn't that most people? Even if I, or anyone else, tried to compromise and split it in half, the people being helped by the donation aren't getting as much as they otherwise would have.

Of course, someone may not have bought something at all, on top of not doing any activism or other work to address racial wealth inequality. To which I say that it's great, because they're no longer justifying their unnecessary purchase for the sake of enriching one BIPOC, or perhaps a family of them. There's no pretense of activism or addressing racism. If someone would have otherwise purchased from a huge corporation or a business not Black-owned even with a Black-owned option, I once again need to ask if that truly does more than enrich a single person and their family. Do we truly need another Oprah? Do we need a Black person as rich as Jeff Bezos in order to declare racism eradicated? Or do we need to ensure that all Black people are allowed to live without fear of dehumanization or even death, whether they have something that other people find desirable enough to pay for or not?

[Personal stuff about teapots that no one cares about or would understand that have been cut for the purpose of maintaining the focus on the Black Lives Matter movement]

Your current editrix,  
Ida Kao

# Section Lies

## What Space is Like

By Finn Scott

There's no up. No down. No left. Nor right. But it all shimmers with purple and blue and a fun color called Cosmic Latte. It's the color of the universe. Scientifically speaking. It's an off-white, that pairs beautifully with forest greens.

It's silent. Not just silent. Sound can't exist here. If I sing and flail and throw whatever I have in my pockets, nothing will happen. No sound. No reaction. Nothing. It's terrifying. And it's freeing.

Some astronauts claim space smells vaguely sulfuric. But that's not romantic. So it doesn't. It smells like a dusty room, and clover. Faintly coffee and lavender. Like it's coming over from the next room over.

It's cold. So don't forget a sweater. Cold, not in a freezing in the Alaskan wilderness kind of way, but cold in an early Christmas morning and it's snowing kind of way. None of the stars are close enough to touch, but I imagine they feel warm.

Taste is funny. I've decided it tastes like TV static and rain. Fizzy, but soft, and natural, but not. When something rumbles so loud you can almost feel it in the back of your throat. That's what space tastes like.

# Be sure to read this message! Your personal data is threatened!

Submitted by Ida Kao on behalf of Emmalyn (ver.  
[canindedosocial@angradosreis.rj.leg.br](mailto:canindedosocial@angradosreis.rj.leg.br)) Date  
2020-08-15 08:18

Hello!

I am a professional coder and I hacked your device's OS when you visited adult website.

I've been watching your activity for a couple of months.

If you don't understand what I am talking about I can explain...

My trojan malware lets me get access to my victim's system. It is multiplatform software with hVNC that can be installed on phones, PC and even TV OS...

It doesn't have any AV's detects because it is encrypted and can't be detected because I update it's signatures every 4 hour.

I can turn on your camera, save your logs and do everything that I want and you won't notice anything.

Now I have all your contacts, sm data and all logs from chats for the latest 2 months but it is not very useful without something that can spoil your reputation...

I recorded your masturbation and the video that you watched. It was disgusting.

I can destroy your life by sending this stuff to everybody you know.  
If you want me to delete this stuff and avoid any problems you have to send \$1000 to my bitcoin address: 1AREpqsjCtQ9UU9q5Kk8QXmje15m3dxcYi

If you don't know how to buy bitcoins use Google, there are a lot of manuals about using, spending and buying this cryptocurrency.

You have 50 hours from now to complete the payment.  
I have a notification that you are reading this message... TIME HAS GONE.

Don't try to respond because this email address is generated.  
Don't try to complain because this and my bitcoin address can't be tracked down.

If I notice that you shared this message everybody will receive your data.  
Bye!

# *Section Hate*

## **pasta is out of stock fetticuinini alfredo**

By Emily Alden Black

*Originally written during the lockdown hell of march 2020. Fuck pasta hoarders.*

Supply Chain Failure Spaghetti: a recipe for the surprisingly mundane problems of the plague times

(Written somewhere near midnight after paper writing hell. For real instructions, google it.)

Is your local grocery store out of spaghetti for the third time this week? Are you craving some kind of pasta so bad you're willing to go to ridiculous lengths to make some? Are you motivated 80% by spite and 20% by hungry? Then look no further than this: homemade pasta for the stubborn and carb addicted.

Ingredients:

2 c flour

3 eggs

Put the flour in a bowl. Make a little crater in the middle like a middle school science fair volcano and crack the eggs into it. Whisk the eggs in the crater/dent/bowl with a fork. This'll slowly draw in the flour from the edges as you stir if you're doing it right. If not, google it. At a certain point, it'll be stiff enough that you'll probably just bend your fork,

so switch it out for your hands. You can dust them with flour if you don't want a mess, but honestly who gives a crap.

Knead (aka screw around with) the dough until it looks like dough instead of lumpy flour and eggs. Think playdoh consistency. Let that sit in the fridge for like an hour if you want to make your job easy. If not just go for it and face the consequences, it's your life.

Dust a cutting board/washable surface with about as much flour as it takes to slap your hand on the board and have it come away white. Roll out the dough with your implement of choice (rolling pin, can of peaches, wine bottle, etc), and fold it back over on itself. Repeat the process a couple of times to make the dough stronger and less prone to breaking apart in the water. It helps to bang the entire thing with your roller, both for rolling things out and releasing pent up aggression at the state of food inventories at your local supermarket.

Roll the dough out into a thin sheet. About the thickness of a well made chef knife is best, but honestly go until you're tired and bored. More thicc=more crunch. Flour both sides of the dough with more flour than you think you need, then add a couple of extra pinches. Roll up the dough like a rug and cut it into strips. Dust in flour. Congrats, you have made a scarce commodity.

Boil in salted water for like 3 minutes. Honestly just take a bite to check doneness. It's easier, and also you're probably hungry. Fuck it, we're in a global pandemic, you can eat half cooked food.

Add whatever it is you put on pasta. Butter, marinara, egg yolk, chocolate sauce, etc. God is dead and we are cosmic ants. Enjoy to spite the dumbasses who are hoarding the spaghetti. Fuckers.



Send  
submissions  
to



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